



Exchange Reports

University of Glasgow

Glasgow, Scotland

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Teaching and Learning Environment

- I took 3 courses: Law and Government, Advanced International Law, and Labour Law. The courses are all taught in English however course selection was still somewhat limited given the high number of courses that conflicted in scheduling. The quality and style of instruction was excellent. I specifically enjoyed Advanced International Law given it was a smaller class with a number of guest speakers. I was assessed with one paper and one final for each of my three courses.
- UofG emphasizes “independent learning” i.e., not much actual class time. This was the case for me. I took three courses, scheduled Monday and Tuesday. Readings were very manageable (a law degree at UofG is undergraduate level). Assessment involved only single exams at the end of term. I found the courses intellectually engaging; I took introduction to Roman Law; Law, Justice and Morality, and Law and Political Economy... It was not an onerous academic semester.
- Exchange students at the University of Glasgow take 3 courses. All upper-year law courses are full-year courses, so exchange students take full-year courses for half the year and get half the number of credits. There are generally also no assessments for the full-year students until the second semester, so exchange students do alternative forms of assessment in December before they leave (i.e., exams, essays).
Since law is an undergraduate program at the University of Glasgow, I took 3rd and 4th year level courses, which were largely comparable to upper-year Queen’s courses. I believe most exchange students from places where law is a post-graduate program did the same. I took European Human Rights, International Family Law, and Principles of Healthcare.
There is a significant lack of consistency among the evaluation methods and amount of work

required for different courses. Although exchange students generally get the same number credits for all courses at the same level, some courses had significantly more assessments than others, even among the courses I took. As another example, another Queen's Law student in different 4th year courses than me had a 1-hour exam as the entire evaluation method for one course, compared to my three different lengthy assessments for European Human Rights. Since the visiting student evaluation is set separately, it is not published in the course information beforehand, so there is generally no way to know what the evaluation method will be for exchange students before registering in the course and speaking with the instructor. Your exchange experience can differ dramatically depending on the courses you end up in and how much time you need to put in to pass your classes, so I would recommend finding out the assessment methods and asking around about other courses before deciding whether to stay in a course.

The University of Glasgow places a lot of emphasis on independent learning. Each class has 2 hours of class a week, and you only take 3 courses. This was great for travelling because it was easy to have a number of days off a week. The downside to this is that there is 8-10 hours of reading assigned per week, and then very little class contact hours to digest all of that reading. Also, exams are closed book but mine resembled a typical Queen's Law exam (fact pattern, essay etc.), meaning that, for my courses at least, it was necessary to do quite a lot of the reading and then memorize cases, legislation etc.

- I took 3 courses, so it felt like a lighter course load than I'm used to which was nice while on exchange. There weren't many course options for exchange students, and that meant that I had to take lower year courses that were more akin to a 1L course than a 3L course. Overall, the instructors were engaging. My only issue with the assessment methods used was that many of the courses tried to pack the same number of assessments into one semester for the exchange students as they do for the full year students - which led to feeling rushed for some of the assignments. For example, I did not receive feedback on my formative assessment in one of my courses until the night before the summative essay was due - making doing the required formative essay essentially pointless.



1 - Submitted by Jesse W.

Quality of Administrative Support for Students

- The administrative assistance was alright. It took some time to receive information on how to enroll in courses and whether this could be done on our own or if they had to enroll us themselves. This led to some confusion and delay in enrollment. Housing was offered and the assistance provided in signing up for this housing was adequate. Furthermore, the school offered complimentary airport pickups upon arrival in the first week which made arrival and moving in a smooth process.
- Administration at UofG, particularly within the law school, felt informal and chaotic at times. It was a couple weeks into actual class before I was able to confirm that the full-year courses I was taking for only half a semester could count for sufficient credits. It wasn't until late November that I learned when my final exams would be scheduled, making it more difficult to plan onwards travel. Final exam rooms were changed with zero notice to students – other quirky things of this nature.
- When you submit your application to the University of Glasgow, you list a number of courses that you're interested in. Then, you have to do separate applications for the 3rd and 4th year level courses closer to the start of the semester (you receive an email about this). These courses have limited space and limited spots for visiting students, so you have to set out your interest in the course and they will slot you in where there is space. You will not be put in courses until you arrive, but they require that you arrive about a week and a half before classes start, so there is lots of time to enroll. That being said, you cannot enroll yourself; you have to be manually enrolled by the law exchange coordinator by emailing them, so it is a bit challenging to get into what you want and change courses once you're in them.

The law exchange coordinator is somewhat helpful but can be a bit hard to get in touch with. The University of Glasgow Study Abroad team, on the other hand, are quite helpful. They are great for general inquiries and provide lots of information and support on arrival, including some info and orientation sessions.

Housing is quite easy to find. All exchange students are guaranteed on-campus accommodation (more on this below), and I believe private housing in the city is relatively easy to find as well.

There was a 3–4-day international student orientation. Some of the events were fun and it was a good way to meet people. You have to register for events before you arrive, and the orientation fills up very quickly (i.e., within a few days). International students were also invited to the orientation week for



2 - Submitted by Jesse W.

first year undergraduate students, which happened after the international student orientation. I didn't run into any problems, but I got the sense that the University administration, and the Study Abroad team in particular, would be quite helpful had I needed anything. I also understand that the University was good with offering academic accommodations, although I don't know any specifics about it.

- I didn't receive any help with finding housing but ended up finding a beautiful apartment with a 4-month lease. Academic support and administrative support were excellent. Registration was made super easy by a dedicated exchange student representative at the school who was always available by email.
- When applying for my exchange I was provided with potential course options that I was to rank. Unfortunately, most of those courses were not being offered during the semester I was attending or were not open to exchange students. Once placed in my courses by an advisor (a very different system than here at Queen's where we are in charge of our own courses and swapping). I was not able to drop or change into any other courses without having the course advisor do it for me, which was very frustrating and time consuming and caused me to take courses that I hadn't really wanted to take, because the other ones had already filled up in the meantime. Otherwise, I encountered no other issues with administration, orientation was pretty good even with COVID protocols.

Campus Facilities

- All my classes were held in different buildings and none of which were held in the law school, but the classrooms were nice. A gym membership is included if you live in residence otherwise can be purchased. The campus is very small which makes it very easy to navigate. They also have a very extensive library.
- The UofG campus is centered around a set of very historic, neo-gothic buildings. Your classes, however, will not be in medieval, Harry Potter-like environs. My classes were scattered around campus in engineering, IT, and medical buildings. Amenities in the rooms, like power outlets for laptops, were typically lacking. Rooms also changed frequently, sometimes week by week, owing to what I gather are ongoing, university-wide space limitations – you have to check your online calendar before class to ensure you're going to the right room.

Other facilities like the gym, library, and cafeteria, were not comparable to Queen's in terms of quality. Some issues that would arise it would often be impossible to find a computer in the library – every spot would be taken (think Stauffer library but worse). Likewise, you cannot find



3 - Submitted by Peter D.

a seat in the cafeteria around lunch (many of UofG's issues seem the same - too many people.) The law school department is not a separate building, but a couple floors of offices and working rooms. There is an adequate space for students to work in the basement called the "Law Workshop", where law texts and a few computers can also be found. Otherwise, the law school itself has no real "facilities", per se.

These considerations, if they sound negative, should not put you off – the university still has a historical core (as, of course, does the surrounding area). Just know that, for the most part, your day-to-day activities at UofG will probably occur neither in modern/high-tech environments, nor super historical ones. It is a fairly post-war institution.

- There is no central law building where all of the law resources and classes are located. Instead, classes are spread around different buildings on campus. There is, however, a building where the law administration and faculty offices are located, which also as a really nice study space for law students. Like Queen's, the University of Glasgow is mostly contained in one campus space. Other study space on campus can be very difficult to find. There is only one library, and it is not uncommon to search all 12 floors and not be able to find a seat, especially during exams. There aren't many other alternative places to study on campus, but there is a public library located close to the university which tends to be quieter. Generally, the campus as a whole seems like it was built to accommodate far less students and it tends to be very busy. It is, however, a beautiful campus!

If you live in university accommodation, your gym membership is included. If not, you have to pay for it separately. The gym is a relatively nice facility, although it is a bit small. The membership does include access to fitness classes and there are tons of classes to choose from.

Student Accommodation and Food

- I opted for the student residence accommodation offered to me by the University. I stayed in Kelvinhaugh Street residence which was a 10–15-minute walk away from campus. This residence was organized in flat units, which meant you had your own private bedroom and then shared a washroom, living room and kitchen with either 2 or 4 other students depending on the unit. My two roommates were also exchange students however were undergraduate students so there was a large age gap. The unit itself was very basic and my room was very small with only a small closet, desk and single bed that was not very comfortable. Nothing was provided in the kitchen, so we had to purchase our own pots, pans, plates, cutlery etc. Laundry was not included but located in a room beside our residence that you paid for my loading money onto an app, it was easy enough to use. The residence is located to a couple of other residences and is where I would assume the bulk of students staying in residence lived. These residences are close to a number of grocery stores, restaurants, and bars. Although staying in residence was an easy way to find accommodation, I would likely recommend finding your own accommodation in the 'West End' right beside the university's campus which also has a subway stop close by making it easy to get to the downtown core. This area is nice and has lots of shops, grocery stores and places to eat and is a very popular area for students.

- For university accommodation, there is an application process that allows you to rank your choices, and then you can either accept or decline where they place you. My residence, Queen Margaret Residence, was a 20–25-minute walk from campus. Some of the residences are a bit closer to the university, but many of them are also about 20–25 minutes. Public transit in Glasgow is not very well developed, so the only way to get to campus was to walk. My residence was a single room with an ensuite bathroom in a 5-person flat in a nice, new building. It was about \$1000/month. It had a kitchen, but we had to buy our own cookware. I cooked most of my meals, but there are tons of options to eat out around campus. There aren't many good food options on campus itself, but campus is in a very popular area of the city (the West End) with lots of cafes and restaurants. I realized afterwards that it would definitely have been possible to find a private rental for cheaper, but it was nice to have a guaranteed place to stay upon arrival, especially since it may have been difficult to find a short-term lease. The staff at the residence were also very helpful, and most of the friends I made were in my building. If you're looking for a stress-free living option, I would recommend university accommodation – especially if you think you want a gym membership, since its included. The only caveat is that some of the residences aren't as new or nice as mine was, so take a look at the information on the university website before accepting your offer. Depending on where you are placed, you might be able to find a significantly nicer private rental.



4 - Submitted by Peter D.

- I lived in the Kelvinhaugh Gate residence which was about a ten-minute walk south of the campus. It wasn't fantastic but pretty standard for university residence. You could make the attempt to find private accommodation, but I found it to be pretty expensive for such a short duration of stay, and especially not worth it if you plan on travelling extensively.
- I stayed in a university accommodation that was a flat with 4 other students, all with single rooms, with shared kitchen and washroom facilities. I really liked this layout because I saved a lot of money cooking my own meals. The property management company was quick to fix any problems in the flat. Many people had a lot of difficulty finding accommodations outside of the university accommodations and I was lucky to even land a spot in one as many people did not. So definitely keep this in mind before rejecting an offer for university accommodations.

Travel to Downtown and Environs

- There is a small subway line that can be used to travel between the university's campus and the downtown core however it does not cover much else of Glasgow. The airport is only a short 10–15-minute drive away from the university's campus. The only public transportation (buses)

offered to and from the airport only leave from the downtown core making it a much longer route although cheaper, therefore we mostly cabbled to and from the airport. There are a large number of flights leaving and departing from the Glasgow airport which are decently priced making travel easy. Traveling in Scotland is quite easy to do so by train.

- U of G is easily walkable from most student housing and accommodation in the West End, or "Hillhead" area - although the average distances are greater than as compared to Queen's campus/student ghetto. My walk to school typically took about 20 minutes which I gathered was about average.

The downtown is accessible via subway, bus, or walking (about 45 minutes). Realistically, you could spend most of your time in the West End, which has plenty of restaurants, cafes, entertainment options, etc.

Travel around Scotland is exceptionally easy via train (or bus), and not too expensive. I made multi-day trips to the Isle of Bute and the Isle of Skye, via Inverness. The school partnered with a local tour company to offer day trips to other places in the region - the St. Andrews tour was quite good.

Travel to England, particularly in the north, also easy. Using the train I traveled to the northern cities of Liverpool, York, and Manchester. London is about a 4–5-hour train ride.

The airport (which is mid-sized and very manageable) is easily accessible via express bus - great for frequent European getaways.

- There is public transit in Glasgow, but it isn't all that convenient. The subway is the most convenient way to get around, but it doesn't go very far. It only has one line, which runs in a circle. The subway is great for getting from campus to the city centre, but it doesn't go to a lot of other places in the city. There are also multiple bus companies in the city, but they are a totally different company from the subway, so you need multiple transit cards. They also aren't very reliable and don't get you everywhere you need to go. Finally, there is the train line, ScotRail, which is very convenient if you live close to a station. All in all, it's best to live within walking distance to the university since transit isn't very convenient, or if not, on the subway line. ScotRail is also a great way to get around Scotland. It goes all over the country and leaves from the city centre. You can even take the train into the highlands, which is a very pretty ride! At least one trip to the highlands is a must. Also head over to an island at some point – Isle of Arran makes for a great day trip from Glasgow, or the Isle of Skye is more of a weekend adventure but well worth it – just make sure you rent a car because the thing to do is drive around the coast of the island.

The Glasgow Airport is mid-sized and flies quite a few places. There is a shuttle bus that leaves from the city centre out to the airport, but Uber is usually the best way to get to the airport and isn't much more expensive than the shuttle. There is also another airport, Prestwick, a little further out of the city which I never flew out of, but which offers a lot of RyanAir flights.

Edinburgh is the biggest hub in Scotland, so sometimes it's better to fly out of there (and sometimes is the only option). CityLink offers a Glasgow City Centre to Edinburgh Airport bus route, which takes about an hour and is very convenient.

- Subway system connects the west end of the city where the university is located to the downtown central area of the city. Only a 15-minute drive to the airport from the west end of

the city. Edinburgh is just a quick 40 minute train ride away. Also, possible to access Sterling and St. Andrews by rail.

You have to take a trip up north to the Isle of Skye and Loch Ness at some point of exchange in Glasgow. It is some of the most stunning nature imaginable and a definite must-see.

- Using public transit to get downtown, the airport, and to my favourite city in the world, Edinburgh, was very quick and easy! I didn't have any issues getting around and saved a lot of money taking public transit rather than Ubering everywhere. I travelled to Edinburgh by bus many times, it was only about an hour away, and highly recommend going there! A bus leaves to and from the Glasgow airport every half an hour and is very easy to navigate - much cheaper than taking a taxi or uber.

City Life Highlights

- I got a sim card from Vodafone when I arrived in Scotland that was data only and that I prepaid for each month. This sim card covered most countries in Europe which made my life easy when traveling. Glasgow is not very safe at night, and I would recommend cabbing home at night even if you think you are only a short walk away from your housing. However, do not let that discourage you as I found people in Glasgow to be very welcoming and kind.
- Glasgow is modern Scottish life at its most real – it was, and remains, a working-class town. For me, this was part of the charm. Relatedly, there is an arts and cultural scene, reflecting real Scottish life, that I prefer over the touristy, refined facades of Edinburgh. Just don't expect much of the food, which suffers from the same general drabness of UK cuisine in general (their beer/whiskey game, of course, is on point).
Be prepared for the punishing exchange rate. Things cost almost twice as much in the UK. This really adds up, not just in terms of those afternoon cappuccinos, but if you plan to do any shopping (i.e., for clothes or other items).
You must be prepared for the fact that the weather in Glasgow, beginning around mid- to late October, is fairly miserable: rainy and grey (lookup the Scottish word "dreich" - that's Glasgow). Add to this, in November, diminishing hours of light per day. One can certainly learn to appreciate Scottish weather (it's lively, and at least you won't be trudging through snow), but know that you will be walking around in cold, dark wind and rains. Definitely bring warm and waterproof footwear and outwear.
- The University of Glasgow is located in the West End of Glasgow, which is one of the best areas of the city. It's also where many students live. There are lots of bars, restaurants, and cafes in the West End. I didn't often leave the West End because it has everything you need. Byers Road is the main hub of the West End and is right beside campus. It has multiple grocery stores, making it easy to grab groceries on the way home. There are also bigger grocery stores like ASDA or Tesco Extra which are bit further away, but which are accessible by bus or taxi – they are also great places to go to get all the stuff you need when you arrive, similar to Walmart. Glasgow is supposed to be one of the cheapest places to live as a student in the UK. The exchange rate wasn't great, but nothing in the city was overly expensive. Aside from the fact

that you'll be eating out and maybe drinking more while you're away, just by virtue of being on exchange, the cost of living is actually pretty similar to Kingston.

Glaswegians are extremely friendly people, and you'll definitely meet many of them anytime you go to a pub! Some highlights close to campus for going out are the multiple bars and restaurants on the very picturesque Ashton Lane, Tuesday Trivia or Sunday Roast at Curler's Rest, or the bar/restaurant/concert venue at Oran Mor, an old church.

The City Centre is known for being the best shopping in the UK outside of London. It also has tons of bars and restaurants. It's only about 10 minutes on the subway from campus to get to the City Centre, or about a 10–15-minute Uber.

- I'd recommend renting a car and exploring the Scottish highland and castles, it was a highlight of my trip.
- Super easy to get a cheap sim card and phone plan. Very fun night life, especially the classic UK pub scene. Generally, not too expensive of a city to live in compared to other big cities in mainland Europe, or London.
- Setting up a cell phone was much easier than I expected it to be. You can go to the Cairncross House residence and get a sim card from one of the main phone providers in the UK (I recommend asking for Giff Gaff) for free from the staff at the desk and then you set it up online. The phone plans are better and cheaper than anything we have here! Groceries were comparable to what we pay here.

Student Life

- There was a small exchange orientation program in the first week and a number of resources for exchange students to reach out to if they are struggling.
- There were plenty of activities for international students, both within the law school and UofG more broadly. The university also had a diverse range of clubs and organizations to join, which you can peruse during a "clubs fair" at the start of the semester.
- There was an international student orientation for the first few days after arrival. We were also invited to attend the first-year orientation week. The School of Law set us up with a buddy, who was generally someone who had just returned to Glasgow from Queen's. They hosted a couple of events for us to get to know our buddies and meet other law exchange students, which was a great way to meet both local students and other exchange students.
There is an International Law Students Society as well as a general Law Student Society, both of which run some good events and are a great place to meet people. Follow their social media to find out about events.
There are two student unions at the University which both have their own large buildings to host events. One of the unions has multiple bars, a club, study space, cafes, and meeting space. The other has cafes, study space, as well as a very popular concert venue. There are always lots of events happening on campus to keep an eye out for.

- The law school ran exchange meet ups for law students visiting the school from around the world. Also, larger events were run for all exchange students regardless of field of study.

Additional Comments

- Overall, it was a great school to attend for exchange and I am very happy I went!
- I chose Glasgow on a balance of factors: I wanted interesting courses in the common-law tradition and with the freedom of the "independent learning" approach (contrast this with the more onerous course requirements at some Continental and Asian schools); a city that I could easily live in and navigate on my own (i.e., not living in student residence); and a good base for UK/European travel. The exchange provided all of this. My experience suited my academic expectations/interests, and I spent very large amounts of time outside Glasgow, traveling in Europe and beyond.

It was also interesting to be in Scotland given the political/social dramas of Brexit, the election, and renewed calls for a Scottish independence referendum.

Admittedly, Glasgow would not be top of everyone's list for an exchange – it is not culturally exotic, and the weather (as mentioned before) can be depressing. But it might be the choice for you if you are interested in the UK, want to experience Scotland, and want a chill semester in a common-law/English jurisdiction.

- Although my academic experience was less than ideal because I had some bad luck with the courses I was in, I loved my time in Glasgow. Had I known what I know now about course selection, I could have definitely crafted a very different schedule for myself.

Glasgow is an incredibly student-friendly city and Scottish people are very friendly. The city itself is beautiful and is a nice size and is far less touristy than Edinburgh. If you're interested in living in the UK, Glasgow is a fantastic place to spend 4 months!

- Overall Glasgow is beautiful and with its proximity to Edinburgh I would highly recommend going here to anyone interested in studying in the UK. Attending the University of Glasgow was pleasant, and the campus is stunning!



5 - Submitted by Peter D.